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ABSTRACT

In an effort to realize the full potential of a working relationship among community schools and community colleges in providing responsive community education and services, four regional meetings and a national conference were held in 1976 by the Center for Community Education. A Kansas City (Missouri) meeting defined and explored three topics: quality of life, economics/environment, and community development. Jacksonville (Florida) participants discussed community strategies, interagency cooperation, and problem areas of community life. In Norwich (Connecticut) discussion focused on defining community education, barriers to human services delivery, sustaining public support, building student confidence, and the "technification" of society. An Oregon City (Oregon) meeting concentrated on barriers to community involvement and ways to overcome the barriers. Finally, a national conference of delegates from the regional meetings focused on conclusions and wrote resolutions for action in the areas of needs assessment, delivery of services, political awareness, and funding patterns. The resolutions are included in the document. (RT)

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A DYNAMIC INTERFACE

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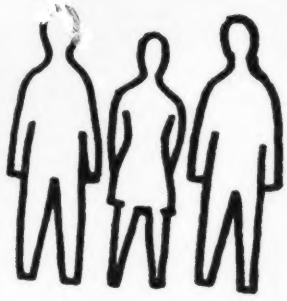

Conference Proceedings

Sponsored by

Center for Community Education
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Center for
Community Education

American Associaton of
Community & Junior Colleges
Washington, D.C.
July - October 1976

Conference Proceedings

The mission to build cooperative relationships among community schools and colleges was enriched greatly through the dynamic interchange of ideas and action strategies that characterized the regional and nationl symposia sponsored by the Center for Community Education.

Purpose for the Conferences

The purpose of the four regional meetings and the national conference was to realize the full potential of a working relationship among community schools and community colleges in providing responsive community education and services. The concept of the community school and the community college working in partnership with other agencies and groups within the community became the premise of the developmental approaches explored by the participants of the four regional conferences–and the theme that each delegate carried to the national symposium.

The symposia design fostered an open forum to explore the philosophical, conceptual, and practical components common to community and junior colleges and community schools. Communication channels among the participating educators were identified and developed in an informal atmosphere of open dialogue and interaction. Discussion centered on issues that affect the development of community based education on the national, state, and local levels, with particular focus on devising viable models for cooperative relationships.

The task force charged with designing the set of regional conferences and national symposium was selected from the membership of the Boards of

Directors for the National Community Education Association (NCEA) and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). Three members from each organization were chosen: Helena Howe, Gunder A. Myran and Benjamin R. Wygal of AACJC; and John Fallon, Carrie P. Meek, and David Santellanes of NCEA.

Program Design

A meeting of the task force took place in late April 1976 for the purpose of determining the general format and location of each regional conference and the national symposium. The basic structure of each conference and the symposium would be aimed at increasing dialogue, interaction, and cooperation, and devising common problem-solving techniques for community schools and community colleges. The meetings would move from the general to the specific, with a goal of directing identified problems and needs to mutually designed strategies of action. The conferences would be structured informally to provide an atmosphere where friendship as well as professional contact among the two groups of educators could result.

At each of the four regional conferences the attendees would select two persons from their ranks to serve as delegates to the national symposium. Alternates would also be named at that time. The presence of regional representatives at the national meeting would assure the desired level of continuity and feed-in necessary to link the individual areas with a central overview.

In selecting the sites for each regional meeting, the task force achieved a balance of such factors as availability, accessibility and adequacy of facilities, efficient transportation services and costs. Therefore, the country was divided into four sections and sites selected in each. In addition to AACJC, cohosting institutions would be present at each conference. Community colleges and university-based community education centers in each location would provide coordination and support resources.

A Dynamic Interface . . .

Where and When

The four regional meetings took place at Kansas City, Missouri on July 21-32, 1976; Jacksonville, Florida on July 28-30, 1976; Norwich, Connecticut on August 11-13, 1976; and, Oregon City, Oregon on September 15-17, 1976. Thirty educators, equally representing community schools and community colleges, participated in each of the conferences. The national symposium was held in Reston, Virginia on October 27-29, 1976. Thirty persons representing all educational levels and federal educational agencies, and the two delegates from each of the regional conferences, were in attendance.

The Regional Conferences

"Community education is a dynamic approach to individual and community improvement based on the premise that local resources can be drawn together to assist in solving most community problems and that the public schools and colleges and governmental services have a capacity for far greater impact upon the community than they are currently making in educational and community services."

This principle, as stated in literature describing the purpose of the Center for Community Education, forms the foundation on which the program activities for the four regional conferences and national symposium were designed.

Each conference opened with a session that outlined the dimensions of the role of community colleges and community schools. Following this, an exchange took place on such items as the definitions of roles, missions of community-based educational planning, developmental funding, the workings of school and college service and outreach programs. The purpose of a specific opening was to give a practical knowledge base for the following sessions.

A keynote overview designed to broaden the practical basis followed the opening sessions. Addressed in general terms were such concerns as individual needs vis-a-vis community needs in an environment of finite resources. Community social issues, the national scene, prospects and forecasts for the future, and a healthy bit of global idealization usually completed this segment of each conference.

After the keynote, the full conference broke into small groups, each with the task of identifying four or five critical areas that could affect future, cooperative ventures. A group spokesperson and recorder were selected at this time. The goal for each of the smaller group sessions was to render five priority areas for further investigation and impact assessment.

On the first evening an informal gathering of all thirty conference participants took place to get to know one another better and to share experiences in a less structured manner. Conversations ranged from discovering surprisingly similar needs and concerns to gaining some new national perspectives. A "we're in it together" sense of comradeship generally evolved at this session, and grew as the conference progressed.

The second day the agenda called for the reconvening of small groups to structure and implement practical tools with which to cooperatively meet defined priority needs. Each group was to remain with one priority topic for the entire session and identify major related issues, inherent problems, and potential solutions.

The afternoon session agenda for the national symposium differed from that of the four regional conferences. At the national meeting, the regional representatives shared information and reported on happenings from their own conferences. James A. Farmer, Jr. gave a presentation on a recently completed study entitled "Alternative Patterns for Strengthening Community Service Programs in Institutions of Higher Education." Dr. Farmer described the findings of the two-year nationwide survey he and Alan B. Knox conducted to identify alternative patterns for developing community service programs. Briefly, the study revealed that five factors are generally required for strengthening developmental efforts: *institutional* and *faculty involvement* in community service, *instructional programs* related to community problem solving, *linkage* between institutions and communities in problem solving, and the *image* of an institution as a resource for community problem solving.

The evening of the second day was left open, with the hope that social interaction among the participants would occur.

On the final day at the regional conferences the previous sessions' work was reviewed to detect potential areas of conflict and to note potential future accomplishments. The full group of each conference met for the selection of two delegates—one from a community college and one from a community school—to represent the region at the national meeting.

At the national symposium, the final day was one of summing up. Conclusions and resolutions for action planning developed in the small groups were formulated. The full group convened to produce a statement for national dissemination. Closing remarks followed later. The final action of the symposium was the selection of two community college representatives and two community education representatives to serve as part of an advisory council for the AACJC Center for Community Education. They are Jessie M. Gist, Jerome Jackson, David A. Santellanes, and Marvin Weiss.

Kansas City, Missouri

The first of the four regional meetings took place at Kansas City, Missouri, on July 21-23, 1976. One of the first sentiments expressed by one of the participants was a hope that the meetings would not be "just one more exchange of rhetoric . . . we're tired of talking just philosophy . . . let's get on to some concrete planning." Another hope expressed was that decisions would transcend the workshop and have some effect. But the meetings must not be so specific that they close some people out who see little personal applicability in the conclusions drawn. It was also observed that it could be possible to develop a "rhetorical device that can call attention to further planning efforts." Two problem areas or points for further exploration came out in this first encounter of the full

group: to define the roles of each institution in community effort; and, not only to identify barriers to cooperation, but also the people who want to cooperate and develop models.

The formal agenda began with the selection of topics to be explored by three groups of participants: quality of life, economics/environment, and community development. A suggested format included identifying specific problems and some barriers to both short-range and long-range solutions.

> "The effective community educator is an entrepreneur—one who knows people's feelings and needs and who is skilled in the techniques needed to instinctively organize responses to those feelings and needs. This is a learning service of the highest order.
>
> "But education also has its bureaucracies. And funding and other considerations lead to the drawing of jurisdictional boundaries separating one agency's turf from that of another. The importance of turfdom seems to increase with each step up the bureaucratic ladder.
>
> "Let those of us on the ladder use our perch to help free the community education entrepreneurs from unnecessary restrictions and red tape so that they can even better serve those 'people interests' we all profess to be among the most important educational priorities today."
>
> —Roger J. Bassett, participant

When the full conference next convened, an excellent spirit of cooperation existed between the community school and community college people. One of the smaller groups had worked on role definition, and had found, through sharing ideas, that they had many common problems. Another group had dealt with other specific issues: turf building, duplicated effort, rental charges, and bickering. This group felt that their interaction had been excellent. Many participants in the third group felt that they were in the position of introducing community education concepts into their respective areas.

Quality of Life

This group identified several problem areas and cited solutions and accompanying barriers:

Problem area—meeting basic skill needs of citizens living in a changing complex society; Solution—joint programming combining learning lab opportunities at college level with adult basic education efforts in community schools; Barriers—funding, laws, and bad attitudes.

Problem area—meeting recreational and avocational needs; Solution—assessing needs and sharing facilities and resources; Barriers—turf building, financial structures, and faculty exchanges.

Problem area—meeting needs of older citizens; Solution—sharing facilities, staff, support services, and funding such as Title III, INA, CETA, Title X; Barriers—lack of money and commitment.

Problem area—meeting the needs of increased leisure, alternative family structures, and the handicapped; Solution—awareness by agencies; Barriers—lack of cooperation and understanding.

Economics/Environment

Because of the diversity of institutions and agencies involved in community education throughout the various regions of the country, the second group elected to use a task force approach to deal with the problem areas of their topic.

In addition, a number of constraints that can develop in the process of introducing community education concepts and practices were identified: constraints of laws, policies and regulations; and organizational, programming, and community constraints.

Community Development

This group recommended that community educational institutions assume a leading role in community development and should develop techniques that will result in community self-determination and problem solving through community development efforts. The group developed a process and self-determination grid stressing the cooperation between community colleges and schools. Credit courses, noncredit courses, long-term programs, identification of community problems, expansion of community interests, and coordination of resources for specific problems were cited as steps to be taken.

Jacksonville, Florida

The second regional conference was held at Jacksonville, Florida, on July 28-30, 1976. Participants brok into three groups, each discussing a variety of topics related to cooperation among educational agencies in coordinating community education functions.

The first group devised a five-step strategy: getting leadership people together; identifying common problem areas and barriers to cooperation; establishing a task force or coordinating group to deal with the identified problem; bringing in others associated with the problem area to make recommendations to the task force; and, planning follow-through action by the task force. They also cited some examples of cooperative work.

"One of the timely initiatives called for is the establishment of working relationships (of community colleges) with other community-based education and training institutions . . . There are at least three compelling reasons for greater effort in forging these connections. There may be economies possible. Learning opportunities are opened up beyond the classroom itself. A coalition of effort in interpreting the high social value of lifelong education will be much more effective than the individual and perhaps self-serving activities of any single kind of educational institution. Educational institutions need to do more than simply respond. In a service-oriented enterprise not only are needs responded to, possibilities are presented."

—Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., participant

The second group addressed the topic "Methods and Procedures for Interagency Cooperation." They first listed some of the major factors related to this topic such as: mutual trust and confidence; the understanding of one another's turf; respect for traditions of others; and, compromise viewed in positive and progressive terms. The major problems inherent in achieving interagency cooperation were seen as gaining perspective, willingness to work towards a goal, and having patience to slowly build cooperation. Although no immediate solutions were seen, short-term goals were defined as getting to know each other and each other's problems. Long-term solutions involved building trust and confidence, integrating funding and control processes, and coordinating planning.

The third group started out by discussing various components of community life such as the family, health, governance, societal changes, and physical support systems. Societal changes that affect community life were identified as the vast difference between "have's" and "have not's" even in small communities, the balance of work and leisure, and racial disharmony. Physical support systems included shortages of energy, food, water and gas, population growth, pollution, transportation, city planning, and urban slums.

In its second session, this group discussed how a cooperative effort might evolve between the two community educational agencies in addressing a particular problem area. Suggestions included establishing a personal working relationship; trust and commitment; developing broad community input through existing structures and through an advisory committee; identifying common concerns, interests, barriers, and advantages of a cooperative effort; and, finally, prioritizing problems as to their relevance, importance, and potential for solution through cooperative effort. In the third session this group chose a topic—"Parenting, Child Abuse and Neglect"—and explored the major issues, areas, criteria, and extent of the problems. A problem-solving strategy was determined, based on a long-term preventive approach and consciousness raising.

Norwich, Connecticut

The third regional conference took place at Norwich, Connecticut, on August 11-13, 1976. Participants broke into five groups, again with the central theme of determining effective ways to develop cooperation among community educators and community college individuals.

The first group focused on a definition of community education that transposes "me-ism" to "we-ism." The process facilitates decision making, problem solving and needs identification through programmatic services, cooperation and information sharing that results in improved self-concepts, quality of life, interaction, and a sense of community.

Barriers preventing community educators and community college people from achieving appropriate delivery of human services were addressed by the second group. A cooperative, collaborative effort would consist of such goals as the coordination of resources, the implementation of a strategy involving the most efficient approach to delivery of services, and the identification of a vehicle for delivery. This was a

participatory governance approach at two levels: citizen input, and an institutional consensus of community needs and the best method of delivery of services.

In dealing with the question "How do I get a piece of the action?" the third group treated issues, problems, and solutions of community colleges and community schools as though they were the same institution—recognizing that leaders of each would approach these items in basically the same manner. Issues, problems, and possible solutions concerned processes for sustaining public support for community education programs despite increasingly scarce funding. The group felt that a definite need exists to stabilize financing of the community education process/programs and that community education leaders should fight to legislate tax-based funding. More effective methods of communicating community education needs and its image to the public are issues to be addressed. This could be aided by renewed effort to involve community education leaders in the political process.

The fourth group discussed the issues and problems involved with community educators helping individuals to feel a sense of personal power, gain confidence, and develop questioning skills to better control their lives in a changing society. Solution goals and objectives were to be based on a statement of principle by community school and college personnel and by a series of task-oriented conferences to deal with such areas as teaching skills and community awareness.

The fifth group discussed the ramificiations of the increasing "technification" of all areas of society through new working relationships and equal give and take among educators, politicians, and the people in a community. A possible contribution that community education might make would be to develop and implement educational brokering centers to bring people and resources together for community problem solving.

In addition to the five group activities, Neil A. Haemer submitted a paper entitled "Community Education and Community Colleges: A Problem of Communication." He discussed blockages to cooperative efforts such as turfdom, protection of power, and misuse or misplacement of philosophical approaches.

Oregon City, Oregon

The fourth and final regional conference was held in Oregon City, Oregon, on September 15-17, 1976. Following the opening session, participants broke into four smaller groups, Groups I and III concentrated on barriers to community involvement, while Groups II and IV addressed the major issues related to overcoming barriers to effective community school and community college cooperation.

Groups I and III prefaced their discussion with the following thought: "Respect and accept that some people choose not to be involved—that a given issue, decision, or process may not be relevant to someone at a given time." Barriers for those who would become involved in community education issues were identified as lack of opportunity to initiate concerns (not knowing where or how to start the communication process), lack of coordinated leadership (outmoded methods of access), the bureaucratic nature of many community response agencies, and the limited understanding and restrictive attitudes of some of those involved in the community action function. Solutions included effective information dissemination, adequate publicity of significant community education events, restructured advisory council approaches, periodic reviewing by designated combination task forces, and making community action responsibilities a part of the job description of each community educator.

Groups II and IV first looked at the problems inherent in achieving effective community school/community college cooperation: lack of understanding and awareness (definitions, missions, roles); lack of commitment due to nonexistent central philosophy or financial, legislative, or policy base; turfism; and, lack of an operational level of communication. Specific solutions were discussed: to achieve a clear understanding of organizational capabilities and limitations at all levels; to define a precise philosophy and policy statement; to identify alternatives to legislative mandated approaches to interagency cooperation; and, to encourage more encounters between community school and community college people.

"The meeting was certainly an 'eye opener' for me since I had never really been involved in a serious dialogue with educators from community colleges, community schools, and the universities on the topic of community schools. We were able to set aside the inhibiting aspects of 'turf protection' that usually place a damper on such conversations in our home areas and simply brainstorm about ways of bringing the total educational resources in a given geographical area to bear on solving problems of the community. I came away convinced that so much more could be done in our communities if only these kinds of people could be brought together in a non-threatening way in other communities."

—Edward J. Liston, participant

Synopsis

Enthusiasm was generally high at the closing of each of the regional conferences, with most of the participants expressing a firm commitment for follow-through action. A spirit of cooperation among all members of the structured groups in the planning and decision making efforts was evident at each of of the two and one-half day meetings. Sessions were characterized by "positive involvement." The participants appeared to be congenial and most demonstrated real interest and willingness to work together.

There were some instances where problems seemed to occur through lack of communication or misunderstanding of "jargonese," and from lack of a balanced level of participation between community school and community college representatives. But, for the most part, the meetings were hailed as valuable and enlightening. The leadership of Suzanne Fletcher and Bob Rue was one of the most effective factors in the successful outcomes of the workshops. As one participant put it, "Their flexibility, openness, willingness to hear what the groups were saying, opened the door for a very positive experience. Most people left with the feeling that we need to use each other as resources much more than in the past."

The National Symposium

The time is now–for partnerships and linkages–between community college and community school professionals, as well as representatives of other agencies, to most effectively meet the needs of the people we all exist to serve."

This was the prevalent feeling of many of the participants as the national symposium convened in Reston, Virginia on October 27-29, 1976. The opening session began as the regional conferences had begun–with an overview of the dimensions of the roles and missions of community schools and colleges. A practical base consisting of working definitions of goals and programs–and how they work at each level–was established. As in the four preceeding conferences, this foundation would guide the participants when they met in small group workshops to explore individual and mutual problems, barriers, and solution-producing models.

During the first session, Edmund J. Gleazer, President of AACJC, spoke to the participants of the role of community colleges and community schools as community-based resource centers for lifelong learning. To achieve this purpose several needs must be met. Among these needs, Dr. Gleazer discussed the assessment of the community's needs, inventories of educational resources, the diagnosis of individual and group needs, facilitation of program and curriculum development, and the continuous need for effectiveness research. He expressed the belief that cooperation is a learned skill, that intergroup relationships function on intergroup needs. The importance of community education is best promoted through cooperation and an understanding of the issues confronting communities throughout the country.

Small Group Interface

The conference was divided into four groups in a manner similar to the proceedings at the regional meetings. Each group took a general interest area and addressed the question: "What are the processes in providing for collaboration/cooperation between community schools and community colleges through community education?" The areas were: needs assessment (Group I); delivery systems (Group II); political awareness (Group III); and, funding patterns (Group IV).

Conclusions and Resolutions

On the final day of the symposium the small groups gathered to arrive at conclusions and resolutions for action. The following are their statements:

Group I. *Needs Assessment*

"We conclude that:

> there is a need to establish a comprehensive approach to collaboration/cooperation in needs/resource analysis between the community schools and the community colleges with appropriate involvement with other institutions, agencies and citizen groups (having insight into needs/resources) to develop community education."

The group then listed several steps to be initiated to achieve effective needs analysis activity. Further:

> "We strongly recommend that the Center for Community Education, AACJC, establish a task force to further develop the area of collaborative needs assessment, and assist in the implementation of the resolutions."

Group II. *Delivery of Services*

"We conclude that:

> in the delivery of community education programming, services and processes, it is imperative that linkages be developed and maintained between community colleges and community schools in order to maximize services to every individual and every community.

"Therefore, be it resolved:

> we urge community college and community school personnel to collaborate in providing community education.
>
> It is imperative that opportunities be provided, and supported by national leadership, to refine, extend, and develop working relationships in order to facilitate the processes of coordinative/collaborative efforts at the national, regional, state and local levels.
>
> Subsequent activities we support include, but are not limited to, the sharing of policy state-

ments, processes, position papers, forums, models, and contractual/cooperative agreements."

Group III. *Political Awareness*

"We conclude that:

there is urgent need for a broader public understanding and support of community education. Community colleges and community schools are among those institutions bearing responsibility for the implementation of community education.

"Therefore, we resolve:

that working relationships between community schools and community colleges be further extended to develop a broader front of those organizations sharing the stewardship. This would be demonstrated in interaction at the local level.

"Further, we recognize:

the concept of lifelong learning, and the efforts of many groups, including the Coalition of Adult Education Organizations, to explore its dimensions. We pledge our assistance in this effort."

Group IV. *Funding Patterns*

In considering the concept of lifelong learning, barriers involved in defining and developing roles, responsibilities, and relationships were named. They were called the "Terrible T's" of turf, trust, and tradition.

The group recognized the need to devise common definitions of educational terminology, roles/responsibilities, and learning concepts. Further, the clarification of roles and responsibilities will help alleviate turfism and increase trust among both groups of educators within the framework of individual and shared traditions. Political awareness was cited as a paramount issue in effective delivery of services. Awareness would be gained through knowledge of community, state, and national power structures, social pressures, legislation, and common involvement in grassroots issues affecting community education. Efficient utilization of common resources would require human needs assessment and cooperative funding programs.

Summary

The national symposium ended much the way it and the regional conferences started—with people asking questions. But there was a difference. In the beginning some participants were skeptical of "just another exercise in rhetoric" and others were concerned that nothing substantive would be achieved. But, by the closing session of the national meeting, there was a strong realization that there is a common ground on which to "get on with it."

There was a realization that there exists between community schools and community colleges common problems, mutual interests, and similar needs. Educators from both agencies heard many of their questions being asked by those "on the other side." They perceived that cooperative efforts on the local level—where they all dwell—are not only possible and desirable, but, indeed, necessary for the innovative delivery of community education and services. It became apparent to the participants that, through pooling of resources, more economical and efficient programs can be provided in their service areas. The "big message" was that individual interests oftentimes can be better served through the planned cooperative and collaborative labors of community schools and community colleges. Further, representatives of local communities were able to identify common areas of concern with those from national educational agencies—which strengthens the hope of a "full circle of cooperation."

Thus, the purpose of the meetings was accomplished.

"The discovery that our goals are not dissimilar, that we are striving toward very common and honorable ends and that, in fact, there are roles for each of us to play, probably was not a real surprise to anyone. But our coming together in this mutual sharing of ideas created an unusual esprit de corps. This will enable us to achieve the maximum benefits of community education much more effectively than we ever could as two factions working at parallels.

"The challenge then, which faces all of us who were fortunate to be a part of this first successful venture, is to spread the word among our colleagues back home. The momentum has begun—it is our efforts which will keep it going."

—Cheryl Willett, participant

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Walla Walla, WA

Phillip J. Anderson
Inver Hills Comm. Col.
Inver Grove Heights, MN

Robert Barber
Conn. St. Dept. of Ed.
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The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges established a Center for Community Education in January 1976, with the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

The primary purposes are:
– to develop an awareness and understanding of community education among the community/junior colleges of the country;
– to facilitate closer working relationships between community/junior colleges, community schools and other groups in the community education fields;
– to encourage other Centers to work with community/junior colleges in the development of community education.

Activities of the Center include workshops and meetings; serving as a clearinghouse for information about community education; fellowships designed to allow professional growth opportunities and providing technical assistance to institutions desiring to become more truly community based. Suzanne M. Fletcher is director of the national Center for Community Education at AACJC.

Conferences developed and conducted by Suzanne M. Fletcher and Robert Rue, President, Mohegan Community College, recipient C. S. Mott Fellowship.

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